



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Friday, October 27, 2000

FLU SHOT UPDATE

As a result of an on-going nationwide delay in the shipment of flu vaccine, most public flu clinics in Monroe County have been postponed, possibly until the end of November. A limited amount of flu vaccine is available locally, but not enough to meet the large demand at public clinics.

Flu Coalition members plan to work collaboratively and hold several large flu clinics in various parts of Monroe County later in November. Planning is underway to identify sites best suited to accommodate large numbers of people.

To reduce the likelihood of a flu outbreak in a nursing home, where the health impact can be devastating, members of the Flu Coalition have been aggressively working on a plan to re-distribute the small quantity of vaccine available to such high-risk facilities. Nursing homes were contacted last week by the Monroe County Health Department to determine their interest in participating in a re-distribution plan. Most agreed to receive vaccine from the Flu Coalition.

Visiting Nurse Service of Rochester and Monroe County has begun making its supply of vaccine available to over 20 area nursing homes. "By making their vaccine available to nursing homes, VNS has really stepped up and demonstrated their commitment to the health of our oldest and sickest residents," said Dr. Nancy Bennett, Monroe County Deputy Health Director. Independent Nursing Care, the agency contracted by Wegmans to provide flu shots, has also indicated their interest in supplying nursing homes with vaccine. "The Health Department is working on facilitating the re-distribution and applauds INC for their community spirit," Bennett added.

Public clinics will immunize individuals in high-risk groups first. People at lower-risk for complications from the flu will be immunized later in the season. Although delayed in its arrival, adequate amounts of flu vaccine are expected to be received in Monroe County.

Flu is a respiratory illness that is spread easily from person to person. Symptoms include rapid onset of fever, sore throat, muscle aches, chills and headache. Data gathered over the past 18 years indicates that the flu generally peaks between December-March. Approximately 20,000 people die from flu or its complications each year in the United States.

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A recorded information line has been established to provide the most current information. The number is: **274-6189**.

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For More Information, contact:

Communications and Special Events at 428-2380, or

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